

More Blessed to Give Rebbe Nachman on Charity

by Chaim Kramer

Selections from *Advice*

We present here some teachings of Rebbe Nachman about the greatness and power of giving charity. These excerpts are taken from our publication *Advice*, pages 234-240. *Advice* is a translation of Reb Noson's *Likutey Eitzot*, a compendium of practical advice gleaned from Rebbe Nachman's *Likutey Moharan*. It is arranged according to subject. The suggestions are presented "as is," without explaining how or why Rebbe Nachman arrived at them. God willing, in future essays we will return to the source material and flesh out a number of the Rebbe's suggestions.

(The paragraph number preceding a teaching is its paragraph number in *Advice*. The "LM" with a number in parentheses following the quote, is its source in *Likutey Moharan*. As the reader will easily discern, we have not quoted all the teachings. We have also edited some of the quotes for presentation in these essays.)

- 1) You should give to charity before you pray. This is the way to avoid the extraneous thoughts which come to a person while praying. You will be able to pray properly without your mind wandering (LM I, 2).
- 2) Giving charity to Torah scholars will protect you from speaking malicious gossip. It will also save you from pride and related character defects. Charity is also a protection against poverty and can make you wealthy (LM I, 4:8).
- 3) In order to break your avarice you must give charity. The harsh anger which hangs over the world will be dissipated, and God's providence will be drawn over the whole world. Through giving charity the forces of love and kindness are brought into the world; the Messiah is revealed, and the Holy Temple, which is itself the revelation of the knowledge of God, will be rebuilt (LM I, 13).
- 4-5) By giving charity to genuine tzaddikim and to those who actually deserve it, converts are made. Through this, one attains perfected wisdom and becomes worthy of seeing the light of the tzaddikim. This is how to achieve love and fear of Heaven. When a person gives charity to the true tzaddikim and to those who actually deserve it, it is as if he gave charity to many Jewish souls (LM I, 17:5).
- 7) When a person charity, the "supernal colors" are revealed. This is a major revelation of the greatness of the Creator. The *kelipot* (forces of evil) are thereby broken and humbled. These *kelipot* are one's fantasies, desires and distractions which range themselves against a person to prevent his entry into the gates of holiness, in particular every time he has to climb from one level to the next. Giving charity makes it possible to break these *kelipot* and ascend from level to level (LM I, 25:4).
- 8-10) Charity is the comprehensive *tikun* (rectification) for business activity. All one's

work-related travel, talk and effort should be made with the mindfulness that his goal is to give charity from his earnings. This rectifies the blemishes he made with his financial assets. Giving charity also expands and elevates the mind, which brings blessing and livelihood. Through giving charity one can come to speak words which radiate with wisdom (LM I, 29:9-10).

11) Acts of charity and lovingkindness have the power to undermine alien ideologies and release us from the burdens of worldly authorities. Then we can achieve a perception of Godliness (LM I, 30:7).

13) All heavenly constellations are directed and governed by charity. It is through charity that all blessings flow into the world. However, only on Shabbat are the blessings perfect. Shabbat is the embodiment of faith. The main significance of charity is that it is an expression of faith. This is why the true radiance of the light of charity and its perfection are seen only on Shabbat - the embodiment of faith (LM I, 31).

14) One should give charity before going on a journey. Then he will be saved from any obstacles and troubles on the way (ibid.).

15) The central aspect of any fast is the charity which the fasting person gives, i.e., the money ordinarily spent on food which is instead donated to charity, is the highlight of one's fast. Fasting and charity make it possible for the body to subdue the soul, form to subdue substance and wisdom to subdue folly. One emerges from darkness to light, from death to life, from the level of animal to that of Man. Alien ideologies and other false and foolish constructs are broken. They are replaced by the wisdom of Torah, which is true wisdom. The hold of forgetfulness is broken, and in its place comes memory. The harsh judgments and darkness are dissipated, and lovingkindness is brought into the world (LM I, 37).

16) Charity given for the Land of Israel is greater than charity for other causes. When you give charity for the Land of Israel you become included in the air of the Land of Israel, which is holy breath without the taint of sin. Harsh judgments, darkness, forgetfulness and folly are banished from the world (ibid. 4).

18) Charity for the Land of Israel can save you from distracting thoughts during prayer. Your mind and thoughts are clarified and purified (LM I, 44).

19) Charity brings abundant peace (LM I, 57:7).

20) Acts of charity bring blessings of love into the world. The honor and majesty of the forces of holiness are released from the Other Side. The lust for food is broken. The prestige and power of brazen usurpers is broken, and honor is returned to the true leaders (LM I, 67).

23) One who gives charity to a truly humble tzaddik who is immediately blessed (LM I, 70).

24) Giving charity anonymously is a *tikun* for wasteful emission of semen (LM I, 83).

25) Charity saves from sin (LM I, 116).

28) The charity you give to Torah scholars is something great and precious. No sin can extinguish this merit (LM I, 204).

29-30) The Sages ordained that we should give between a tenth and a fifth of our income to charity. This tithe has the power to save us from our enemies. It also brings us contentment (LM I, 221).

32) Charity is a remedy for immorality. However, it is important not to give money to a poor person who is undeserving because this only makes things worse. One must beg God to make him worthy of finding poor people who deserve to be helped (LM I, 264).

36) Charity has the power to widen the entrance to holiness. When a person wants to embark upon a path of devotion, he needs to make an opening in order to enter his new path. This is what makes all beginnings difficult. Giving charity makes the entrance wider (LM II, 4:2).

37-39) Be aware that the effects of charity are very, very great. The body has many needs - even essentials, like food, drink, clothing and shelter are very demanding. They are all a distraction from one's religious devotions. Nonetheless, charity has the power to break all these obstacles because it opens up the channels of God's blessing and love to the point where one has no need to work at all in order to have what he needs. All his work will be done by others, leaving him free to devote himself to the service of God. In addition, charity is the remedy for all wounds (ibid. 3, 12).

43) You must learn the thirteen Divine attributes of lovingkindness - learn them in order to put them into practice. You must cultivate the quality of love and do as many kindnesses as you can for others. When we strive to fulfill each of the thirteen attributes of love, the thirteen supernal attributes of love are aroused, and the destructive angels brought into being through sin are humbled. Our acts of kindness arouse God's forgiveness and He removes our initial sins (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #89).

Please remember, these first essays are meant to introduce the concepts of charity. We hope to go more into depth about what charity means to us in our daily lives, as well as its powerful positive influence upon the entire world, in time for the month of Elul and Rosh Hashanah.

Next week we hope to present Rebbe Nachman's teachings from his *Aleph-Bet Book* along with several of the laws of charity. Have a great week, one with salvation and good health to all.

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